

6,300 aerospace industry staff needed: study

Pool of engineers, technicians needs to expand to support sector's growth

By **VEN SREENIVASAN**

[SINGAPORE] Singapore's aerospace industry will require about 6,300 employees up to 2015, including 375 engineers, 2,600 technicians and about 700 licensed aircraft engineers and inspectors, a study has found.

The study - commissioned by the Association of Aerospace Industries (Singapore) and conducted by Mercer Consulting - was released yesterday at the AAIS Aero Industry Annual Meeting.

It said the increase in headcount is required to support an industry that has grown at a compound annual rate of 9.8 per cent over the past 15 years, and whose revenue will increase from \$7.1 billion last year to \$9.3 billion by 2015.

Of this \$9.3 billion, 91 per cent will be manufacturing, while the remaining 9 per cent will be from maintenance, repair and overhaul work.

However, the study also found Singapore's tertiary education system is well placed to meet the aero-

space industry's human resources needs, especially for engineers.

"While 375 fresh engineers are required to cover growth and industry attrition from 2009 to 2015, 83 engineers are expected to graduate every year from Nanyang Technological University alone," it said. "Taking into account leakages to other industries, attracting a fraction of other graduating engineers should suffice to meet demand."

But the study cautioned that given the much larger pool of technicians required, there "may be a need to look at alternate labour."

This, it said, could include re-skilling workers from other industries to turn them into aerospace technicians.

Attracting such converts may not be a big problem, given the aerospace industry is a good paymaster.

AAIS data shows that last year, aerospace engineers were the fourth highest-paid professionals, after their peers in the chemical, pharmaceutical and biomedical sectors. They were ahead of the banking and high-tech sectors.

As for aerospace technicians, they were the second highest paid, after the chemical industry.

The study surveyed 35 aerospace companies with total revenue of \$6.5 billion and a combined headcount of 17,000, including 14,000 aerospace workers.

Addressing delegates at yesterday's gathering, Second Minister for Finance and Transport Lim Hwee Hua said that besides hiring, the aerospace industry also has to boost productivity.

It was with this in mind that Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) rolled out its \$100 million Aviation Development Fund earlier this year, Mrs Lim said.

"As an enabler of the Singapore aviation industry, CAAS recognises the importance of building a highly skilled and productive work force for the aerospace industry," she said.

"Towards this goal, CAAS is developing a new programme aimed at attracting talent, building manpower base, upgrading the work force as well as re-training talent for the aviation industry."

Mrs Lim said that going forward, the aerospace activity here has to move further up the value chain.

Singapore is the largest aerospace hub in the Asia-Pacific, with value-added last year of some \$2.5 billion.



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Rewarding job: Aerospace engineers were the fourth highest-paid professionals, after their peers in the chemical, pharma, biomedical sectors

CAAS grants \$50m to aviation devt projects

By **VEN SREENIVASAN**

[SINGAPORE] The Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore (CAAS) has awarded grants to the first two projects under the \$100 million Aviation Development Fund (ADF), which was launched in April to promote and develop the aviation sector in Singapore.

The first grant of \$25 million is for the setting-up of a flammability test laboratory in Singapore. CAAS said the co-funding would cover the purchase of equipment, materials and software, and the salaries and

training of staff engaged in the project.

"The flammability test laboratory will add a new capability in the Singapore aviation industry," CAAS said in a statement. "The laboratory will be used for the testing and certification of materials used in aircraft cabin components, such as wall/light/ceiling panels, door linings, seat belts, seat cushions and signages, prior to being fitted in aircraft."

It added that by carrying out flammability tests in Singapore, maintenance, re-

pair and overhaul (MRO) companies and airlines could enjoy savings from lower logistical costs and shorter turnaround times, as well as have greater visibility in the progress of their jobs.

"More importantly, these benefits will see niches of excellence such as manufacturing, cabin interior design and modification as well as aircraft conversion being further built up in Singapore."

The second \$25 million grant is under the Aviation Partnership Programme,

and directed to the Aerospace Standards (AS) Adoption Programme. This will promote Aerospace Standards, more commonly known as AS9100, throughout the aerospace cluster in Singapore.

The AS Adoption Programme complements the existing SPRING-AAIS initiative to drive the adoption of the AS9100 by small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Under the AS Adoption Programme, companies adopting the AS will receive co-funding for their total consultancy and certification costs.

"AS9100 aims to bring the global aerospace community to a single Quality Management Standard (QMS)," CAAS said. "Major companies rely on the AS9100 certification to ascertain the effectiveness and quality of their suppliers' processes and QMS, and hence have listed AS9100 certification as a key supplier prerequisite."

It added that the wider adoption of AS9100 by aerospace companies in Singapore would raise the productivity and competitiveness of the Singapore aerospace cluster.